

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1986

RICHARD W. RILEY, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO ADDRESS THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN JOINT SESSION AT 7:00 P. M. ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 1986.

Governor Riley was escorted to the rostrum by Senators Waddell, Mitchell and Theodore and Representatives L. MARTIN, MITCHELL and FAIR.

The PRESIDENT introduced Governor Riley who then addressed the Joint Assembly as follows:

ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR RICHARD W. RILEY

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Before a Joint Session of the
106th General Assembly of
South Carolina

Columbia
January 22, 1986

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Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Members of this Joint Assembly, My Fellow South Carolinians:

First of all, let me thank each of you for your expressions of sympathy on the death of my mother last week. We all appreciate it very much.

Tonight marks the eighth occasion for us to come together to review the state of our state, and to look ahead at the unfinished challenges.

Together, we have carved a new spirit of hope and confidence, carved it on the minds and hearts of South Carolinians. We have closed the door on a South Carolina that tolerated mediocrity and we have entered a new South Carolina of firsts -- first in progress, first in commitment, and first in excellence.

This task has not been accomplished without much hard work and some frustration. But we have come to base our decision making, less on political expediency, and more on the best long term

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interests of our state. The spirit of partnership we have shown throughout this journey has served to produce a new image of South Carolina -- an image that is changing minds and turning heads across America and around the world.

Let us now take a few minutes to examine the state of our State -- to turn back the pages of recent years, to reconstruct the record of our victories in education, in economic development, in human achievement and in the care of our environment. It is a South Carolina moving ahead with confidence, striving to be its very best, proud of its many firsts.

Proud that South Carolinians were honored as the National Teacher of the Year, the National Science Teacher of the Year, and the National Junior College Teacher of the Year.

Proud that the Education Improvement Act was judged the most comprehensive educational reform in the nation by the prestigious Rand Corporation.

Proud that South Carolinians were chosen the National Mother of the Year, the nation's most honored volunteer and the Handicapped American of the Year.

Proud that a national magazine ranked Charleston as the number one city for business in the country.

Proud that the national ACIR ranked us first in the nation for fairness in balancing the impact of the three primary taxes on business.

Proud of our top-ranked international business school at USC and our nationally recognized Integrated Circuit Computer Project at Clemson.

Proud of our internationally recognized arts festival -- Spoleto USA.

Proud of our top-ranked National Guard and Air National Guard, which reflect that we in South Carolina have always been first in patriotism.

Proud of our five South Carolina astronauts, our two Nobel Laureates for the great examples that they have set for our school children.

Yesterday, I'm proud that Mack Truck, second largest truck manufacturing company in the world, a great company, seized the economic promise in South

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Carolina and made its decision today to locate their \$80 million manufacturing plant in Fairfield County, which will bring over 1200 jobs to this state. And we, all of us, proudly welcome our new corporate citizen to South Carolina. I'm told they will be breaking ground in February, some three weeks from now. Mack Trucks makes me think of another thing to be proud of, the "Refrigerator". Our triple threat of the Chicago Bears, South Carolinian, and folk hero of this country, William Perry.

These recent firsts honor the strong character of our people and their realization of the truth of Robert Browning's wisdom that "A man's reach must exceed his grasp." To our state these have become, not mere words, but the embodiment of our determination that we can be the very best.

Tonight, we enjoy the triumphant conclusion of a seven year struggle to enact our country's first low level nuclear waste policy. In 1979, our beautiful state was the nuclear dumping ground for this nation. Today, we take less than half of the waste we received in 1979. On December 31, 1992, we will receive no more.

Until then, states outside our region, which desire to use our low level waste site, must pay more for burying less here in this state. I recommend that any funds we receive from the new surcharges be divided to fund a water and sewer program for our local areas that face health hazards and one-half to preserve special natural places that we can visit and enjoy forever through the Heritage Land Trust Fund.

I am proud that we have the strength of conviction to stand together and boldly lead the nation to a historic first in nuclear waste policy. Let us use the fruits of this victory to help preserve the most precious legacy that endures -- the good earth of South Carolina for generations to come.

The new image we have achieved for this state also is embodied in our commitment to be first

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where it counts -- in the classroom. In a state too long shackled with a prescription for educational mediocrity, we now are recognized throughout the country for our daring remedies to achieve excellence. And our firsts are so many we have even surprised ourselves.

For the first time, the average scores of all of our public school students are at or above the national average in basic skills tests -- producing the highest two-year gains by the children of any state, at any time. We have led this nation in our gains on the SAT. And our students have a new positive attitude toward learning reflected in our attendance levels -- the highest in the nation.

This is just the first light on South Carolina's new educational horizon. But this light will shine only as long as we continue our personal and financial commitment to excellence. Education in South Carolina is truly a partnership to which all must contribute -- a partnership not just of our primary and secondary schools, but of our technical and higher education systems as well.

Seven years ago, we pledged that South Carolina would be first in the first grade. We have more than honored that pledge by being first in our investment of time, money and people to educational excellence from preschool to graduate school. It is now our challenge to sustain this progress and resist both direct and indirect attempts to break our covenant with the people.

Our determination to improve has been balanced with an earnest effort to keep faith with our historic principles of prudent management and controlled growth of government. That tradition has been reinforced by cementing these principles into the bedrock of our Constitution. Here are some of the simple and straight forward facts.

In 1979, there were no limits set on the growth of State Government. Today, we have a constitutional spending limit which ties the growth of government spending directly to the growth of our economy.

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In 1979, our state debt limit was set in the Constitution at 7 percent. Today, the Constitutional mandate is 5 percent, and last year we approved a statute to further reduce that limit to 2 1/2 percent by 1989.

In 1979, there was no constitutional mandate for a balanced state budget. Today, we have a constitutionally required balanced budget and an \$89 million reserve fund, assuring that State Government -- unlike our federal counterpart -- will never experience budget deficits.

In 1980, the first year for which we have statistics, there were 39,000 state paid employees. Today, we have 2000 less during a period when demand for state services has clearly increased. In short, we became more productive. And now, the number of new state employees is constitutionally governed by the growth of the state's population.

In 1979, South Carolina consumers paid 4 percent sales tax on their utility bills. Today, they pay nothing.

In 1979, senior citizens and the totally disabled enjoyed a \$12,000 homestead exemption on their property taxes. Today, that exemption is \$20,000.

In 1979, the personal exemption for all taxpayers was \$800 per dependent. Today, that exemption has been raised to \$1040.

In 1979, merchants paid \$28 million a year in inventory taxes. Today, that tax is being phased out.

All of this is proof that we can provide sensible incentives to help sustain economic prosperity, control the growth of government, provide services to people in need, and still have a tax system that is fair to everyone.

But like other areas of progress, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must move boldly ahead with new initiatives which challenge state employees and managers to be as productive as possible. I urge this General Assembly to adopt the pay-for-performance plan recommended by the Budget and Control Board. This concept is already common

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practice in many of South Carolina's major corporations -- companies like Daniel Construction, Colonial Life, Spartan Mills, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Our call for better management of government must be more than just hollow words. We must have the foresight to implement those business procedures which have been shown to work and to succeed.

Coupled with our great efforts to improve education, we have also made investments that clearly show healthy children come first in this state. We are the first state to finance an equitable program to provide indigent health care. And for the first time, we have begun to reverse those grim statistics that have plagued our state for generations. We are now the vanguard in a national movement to defeat the crippling problems of infant mortality and infant disability, and improve the health of all our children.

As Chairman of the Southern Task Force on Infant Mortality, I have asked every other Southern governor to focus their energies on this uniquely Southern dilemma. Tonight, I ask this General Assembly to accelerate our defense of the defenseless. To assist in our crusade, I ask you to create a Maternal, Infant and Child Health Council to help coordinate our goal of healthy children. I also ask your full attention to recommendations which will be issued later this year by a blue ribbon committee on teenage pregnancy. We must not allow the children of tomorrow to suffer for our lack of action today.

Our concern for children also must be mirrored in our state's public adoption policy. There must be safeguards in our adoption laws that will make the protection of the child our primary focus, not the protection of state agencies. I urge your approval of legislation to establish a single public adoption agency to eliminate the waste of duplication and bring about accountability on behalf of these children.

There are few states that can match our commitment to the dignity and care of our elderly

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citizens. We are the first state in the nation to implement a statewide community long term care system -- a system that allows many older South Carolinians to remain in their homes and receive services.

With our growing elderly population, we must be leaders in our commitment to geriatrics research and treatment. I am personally familiar with the fact that M.U.S.C. is building a strong foundation in this specialty. This year, we also can add greatly to the elderly's sense of worth, security and comfort by simplifying and modernizing our probate code. If we pull together and pass this measure, we will have benefited all families in this state.

Every South Carolinian knows that being first and staying first depends on the successful marriage of education and jobs. In our efforts to be first, we have reached beyond the traditional avenues of economic growth to build a new guard of small businesses, service industries, our strong tourist industry, export trade, food processing, and technology-based industries to blend with our older economic sectors. This effort has been rich in its rewards.

Last year, we had the highest percentage increase of new business starts in the nation -- helping to create 68,000 new jobs. An interesting statistic to go with that is the fact that we also had the lowest number of business failures in the nation. Despite the shocks suffered by our textile industry, new investment in manufacturing alone has averaged almost \$2 billion a year since 1980 -- clear evidence of the confidence that business has in the future of this state.

These facts clearly indicate the vigor and potential of our economy. But the competitiveness of a global economy demands that we keep moving forward. We must be prepared to marshal all our economic resources to give South Carolinians the best training, the best jobs and the best chance at success.

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We must enact the Coordinating Council for Economic Development to provide us with a clear vision of the future and a strategic economic plan to ensure more jobs and greater growth. I urge your approval of the export tax deferral bill, to help us create jobs from exports to replace those jobs lost to imports. We must update our constitution so that State Government will have the necessary tools to build the foundation for economic growth in this decade and into the 1990's. Further, we must establish a water and sewer infrastructure program to help our local governments deal with this very difficult problem.

And of critical importance, we must prepare our people with the training, flexibility and education to be a workforce that can keep us on the cutting edge in a competitive economy. The Employment Revitalization Act -- called the new Era -- brings together the strengths of our educational and training systems in a coordinated thrust to insure that training is available for jobs with a future. This legislation proposes:

- \$1 million of new funds to support special training for unemployed textile workers, our beleaguered farmers and others who are out of work or seek a different kind of work.

- \$1.3 million to fight adult illiteracy among the 840,000 South Carolinians without a high school diploma who must have a good basic skill in order to compete for a job.

- That we focus attention on at-risk youth which will pay great dividends in our future.

The New Era, the job-training bill, also creates a partnership among our training agencies, our business recruitment teams and local communities. Together, these partners, with the demands of our changing economy, will be linked to training and retraining and working together. Just as we have given our children the tools to seek excellence in education, let us give our adults the opportunity to seek both a good job and a good life.

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In a South Carolina of firsts, I can see but one major storm on an otherwise bright horizon -- crime, which threatens the safety of our citizens, and prison growth, which threatens each and every taxpayer of this state.

My position on crime and punishment is clear. Those who willfully violate the laws of our state will be punished. And those who choose to inflict violence upon their neighbors will be severely punished. For those who commit violent crimes, I propose:

- Stiffer penalties for repeat violent offenders;
- Additional, non-paroleable sentences for criminals who use firearms, an important priority for Citizens Against Violent Crime;
- Parole hearings for violent offenders on a two-year, instead of an annual, basis;
- A requirement that those imprisoned share in paying for their imprisonment;
- Safe and adequate prison space to secure those who prey on society, and;
- That our prisons be made places of productive work and not warehouses for idle mischief.

However, we are fooling ourselves -- and misleading the taxpayers of this state -- if we think we can build our way out of the crime problem. It can't be done. Tax dollars spent on prisons are tax dollars that otherwise could be spent on such things as a state-of-the-art crime lab at SLED, a violent crime strike force, tax credits for crime prevention improvements in our homes, and other tools which will help law enforcement fight and prevent crime.

We must not let unrestrained rhetoric override our good judgment. Just as we must be firm in our treatment of violent criminals, we must be smart in our handling of non-violent offenders. We must recognize that punishment in the future must consist of such things as hard work, of requiring criminals to pay restitution to their victims, and requiring them to pay the cost of their supervision.

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The Omnibus Crime Bill is a responsible state funded solution to much of our crime and prison problem. It will not impose additional financial burdens on our counties. With it, we can have justice for the victim and justice for the taxpayer without saddling our children and our grandchildren with a prison debt that would threaten every positive thing that we have tried to accomplish for our beloved state.

All around us -- in Tennessee, in West Virginia, in Iowa -- are dark warnings of the dire consequences of inaction. As responsible lawmakers and stewards of the public trust, we must have the courage to resolve this crisis and not make prison costs South Carolina's equivalent of the national debt. To do otherwise would be mortgaging our future to prisons, instead of investing in better weapons to help law enforcement fight and prevent crime; mortgaging our future to prisons, instead of investing in healthy minds and healthy bodies; mortgaging our future to prisons, instead of investing in excellence in our classrooms and in more and better jobs for our people.

I also urge your action on governmental tort liability which must be resolved by July 1 of this year; election law reform in this important election year; and the local government finance act to help cities and counties.

Tonight, I want to share one other success story with you. It is a story of people in South Carolina who are building strong futures, people who now have the opportunity to improve their own lives.

Let me present to you in this chamber, Mrs. Margaret Young and her daughter Ashley Faith of Florence, both of whom are healthy and thriving because of the benefits they enjoyed from child health programs that you initiated. Meet Jeremiah Dillard, a second grader at Aiken Elementary, who tested not ready for the first grade. After attending EIA remedial programs last year, Jeremiah is now back in the regular program and making an A in math. And Sally Barton of Simpsonville and

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Donte Lazarus of Charleston. These talented students are both participating in the academically and artistically gifted programs offered through the EIA.

Jim Morton is here representing Michelin which recognized our productive business climate and has brought over 7,000-jobs through their grand industry to this state. Let me also introduce James Horton and Randy Campbell, both former textile workers from Great Falls. James and Randy now work in high tech jobs at MCM Industries in Great Falls because of retraining they received from TEC. Meet Mr. and Mrs. W.L. McIntosh who used the Victims Bill of Rights to participate in the sentencing of a burglar who broke into their home. And finally, Mrs. Mary Jane Lovett, age 80, who lives at home among family and friends and yet still receives the care and service that she deserves at home, because of your leadership in providing community-based health care programs.

These are not faceless programs or numbers in a budget. These are real people -- our neighbors -- who have worked hard and who now have new opportunities to make their lives, and ours, and their businesses even better. They are faces of the new South Carolina -- a South Carolina of improvement, of commitment, of progress, of excellence. Tonight, they are here not to lobby you for any special interest nor to seek any special favors. They are here simply to say thank you.

It has been my honor to serve as your governor longer than any other person. I tell you, as the song says, "I have South Carolinians on my mind." During these past seven years, I have developed a deep feeling of trust and confidence in the people of South Carolina. Confidence in teachers and children. Confidence in workers and business people. Confidence in doctors, lawyers and professional people. Confidence in mothers and fathers to be good parents. Confidence in this General Assembly and all other state and local

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elected officials to lead this state as we continue to grow and to improve.

I am confident that the people of this state stand united and committed to pursue a standard of excellence in everything they do. Your challenge as leaders must be to have the courage to tackle the tough issues and meet these same high standards. I am confident you stand ready to do what is right for this great state.

Over the next few months, we will witness the journey through time of Halley's Comet -- a celestial visitor we welcome every 76 years. Tonight, it passes over a state filled with the optimism only the promise of a bright future can bring. Our fervent hope and dream must be that on its next visit it will find a South Carolina where infant mortality is but a fleeting statistic in our memory and all our children are healthy; where our streets are safe from crime and we are building classrooms instead of prisons; where adult illiteracy is extinct, and educational excellence is a principle we no longer seek, but enjoy; where full employment is a fact of life for every single family in this state.

I know the comet will visit a South Carolina proud of its past but one which is more committed to its future. A South Carolina that knows it must always keep moving, keep working, keep praying, keep improving, to be the very best.

That should be our lasting charge for the future -- to look at ourselves as builders shaping, for one brief moment, our future, working together with dreams and hopes that we will leave South Carolina better than we found it.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Upon the conclusion of his address, Governor Riley and his escort party retired from the Chamber.

JOINT ASSEMBLY RECEDES

The purposes of the Joint Assembly having been accomplished, the PRESIDENT announced that under